



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

Memorandum:

TO: Public Health Committee

FROM: Commissioner Patricia Rehmer, MSN, DMHAS

DATE: March 4, 2015

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on House Bill 6269

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Commissioner Patricia Rehmer of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and I am writing today to address proposed H.B. No. 6269 AN ACT CONCERNING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH.

DMHAS is aware of the problem of homeless youth throughout the state and also knows that many of these youth have mental health or substance abuse disorders. Connecticut has a strong partnership between state agencies to deal with homelessness and within the past year, DMHAS, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Department of Housing (DOH) have begun discussions on how to improve the service system for homeless youth. Many ideas have been created, such as creating specific programs, including emergency shelter and supportive housing for homeless youth. One constant focus of this collaboration is how to best refer homeless youth that are presenting with mental health or substance abuse issues to the proper agency.

In addition, Connecticut is in the midst of doing its first statewide count of homeless youth. Through this count, we will be in a better position to determine the true extent of the problem and will be able to create a better response to the problem we see. DMHAS is committed to working with DOH and DCF to ensure that those homeless youth that present with a mental health or substance abuse disorder get the proper treatment services that they need.

We would also suggest that you speak with the Department of Housing on this matter should you decide to move forward. Thank you for your time and attention.